

Chronic Disease Indicators: Indicator Definition



Fecal occult blood test among adults aged ≥ 50 years

Category:	Cancer
Demographic Group:	Resident persons aged ≥ 50 years.
Numerator:	Respondents aged ≥ 50 years who report having had a fecal occult blood test (FOBT) within the previous year.
Denominator:	Respondents aged ≥ 50 years who report ever having or never having an FOBT (excluding unknowns and refusals).
Measures of Frequency:	Annual prevalence — crude and age-adjusted (standardized by the direct method to the year 2000 standard U.S. population, distribution 17*) — with 95% confidence interval.
Time Period of Case Definition:	Previous year.
Background:	In 2001, among adults aged ≥ 50 years, 69% had not had an FOBT within the previous 2 years. During 2001, cancer of the colon and rectum caused approximately 56,700 deaths and was the second most common cause of cancer death. Approximately 148,000 new cases are diagnosed annually. The incidence of colon and rectum cancer rises sharply after age 50 years.
Significance :	Early detection with FOBT and sigmoidoscopy/colonoscopy, treatment of precancerous lesions, and treatment in the early stages of cancer decrease mortality from colon and rectum cancer.
Limitations of Indicator:	A lack of scientific and clinical consensus exists concerning the choice of screening tests, the appropriate screening intervals, and the cost-effectiveness of screening. The specificity of FOBT is low.
Data Resources:	Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey (BRFSS). http://statecancerprofiles.cancer.gov/
Limitations of Data Resources:	As with all self-reported sample surveys, BRFSS data might be subject to systematic error resulting from noncoverage (e.g., lower telephone coverage among populations of low socioeconomic status), nonresponse (e.g., refusal to participate in the survey or to answer specific questions), or measurement (e.g., social desirability or recall bias).
Healthy People 2010 Objectives:	3-12: Increase the proportion of adults who receive a colorectal cancer screening examination. (3-12a is specific for adults aged ≥ 50 years who have received an FOBT within the preceding 2 years.)

* See Klein RJ, Schoenborn CA. Age adjustment using the 2000 projected U.S. population. Hyattsville, MD: US Department of Health and Human Services, CDC, National Center for Health Statistics, 2001. Healthy people 2010 statistical notes, no. 20. <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/statnt/statnt20.pdf>